

NIH POLICY MANUAL

26101-41-E - SELF-SERVICE STORE CHARGE CARDS

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1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This NIH Manual Chapter establishes and updates specific procedures for the ICDs to follow to safeguard and control the use of the NIH Self-Service Store charge cards.

2. **Filing Instructions:**

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A. Purpose:

This Manual Chapter establishes specific procedures to be followed by the ICDs to safeguard and control the use of the NIH Self-Service Store charge cards.

B. Background:

Within its central stock program, the Supply Branch, Division of Logistics, manages the Self-Service Stores to provide convenient walk-in shopping. Stocked items include laboratory and administrative supplies. Customers make purchases with Supply Branch issued charge cards. Prior policy prohibited contract employees from making purchases at the Self-Service Stores. This revision lifts the restriction and delegates the responsibility to the ICDs to authorize use of the ICD charge cards for purchases to support the ICD mission.

C. Policy:

National Institutes of Health policy is that Self-Service Store charge cards are to purchase supplies for official Government use only. Authorized users are all NIH ICDs

and other government agencies with an approved and current cross-servicing agreement in effect. Only authorized users shall be issued charge cards. The authorized user is responsible to control the assigned charge cards and to exercise necessary controls to prevent abuse or use by unauthorized personnel. The NIH Executive Officers have complete responsibility to request and control the use of charge cards in their respective ICDs.

D. Procedures:

1. Requesting Charge Cards

ICD Executive Officers may request charge cards from the Supply Branch (see sample memo attached) and must sign for receipt of the card(s). ICD Executive Officers may designate specific Administrative Officers as charge card custodians who must accept full responsibility for the use of each card received.

Administrative Officers (i.e., charge card custodians) may re-delegate responsibility for the control and use of a charge card(s) (e.g., to a specific laboratory) but must provide the Supply Branch with the name, title, organization and telephone number of those individuals to whom authority has been re-delegated. A re-delegation memo must be given to the charge card custodian and retained in his/her file. These procedures must also be followed if any changes in the original designation occur. As part of the original request for charge cards, ICD Executive Officers must certify that the charge card safeguard provisions in this chapter will be complied with fully.

2. Issuance of Charge Cards

The number of charge cards issued to an ICD is limited to the actual quantity required to efficiently conduct official Government business. If an ICD needs multiple cards for the same Common Accounting Number (CAN), specific justification is necessary to support the request. For example, geographic separation of organizations assigned the same CAN may require multiple cards.

Annually, the Supply Branch shall require all ICDs to validate their applicable CAN and verify their continued need to use the charge card. The Supply Branch will verify all authorized CANs with the Office of Financial Management. The Self-Service Store shall refuse to accept from users any card with an invalid CAN, a lapsed card, or an unauthorized card. The Self-Service Store staff shall refer a user with an invalid or unauthorized card to the ICD Administrative Officer to resolve the problem.

The Supply Branch shall expedite requests for replacement cards if cards are lost, damaged, or stolen. Report immediately any lost or stolen charge cards to the Chief, Supply Branch, (496-3517).

3. Safeguarding Charge Cards

Administrative Officers (and those with re-delegated authority for charge cards) must take appropriate measures to safeguard charge cards in their possession (such as securing them in a locked cabinet or drawer) and ensure that only responsible NIH personnel are authorized to use the cards. The charge card custodian must maintain a register for the charge card to attest to the receipt and return of the card after use. Charge card users shall return the cards and store receipts to the charge card custodian immediately after usage to ensure proper control of cards.

4. Review of Charge Card Purchases

Self-Service Store charge receipts identify the stock number, description, quantity and cost of items purchased. Charge card custodians should review the charge receipts at the time of purchase to determine if any items purchased are not required for carrying out the organization's program. To document this review, charge card custodians must initial and date each receipt. In the event that the charge card custodian patronizes the store, his/her supervisor must initial and date these receipts. If misuse of a charge card is evident, the charge card custodian can determine the employee involved by referring to the signature and NIH identification card number on the charge receipt. Self-Service Store charge receipts must be retained for three years by the charge card custodian.

5. Presentation of NIH Identification Card

Authorized NIH users of Self-Service Store charge cards must present their official NIH identification card when making purchases at the Self-Service Stores. **NO SALES WILL BE PROCESSED THROUGH THE SELF-SERVICE STORE CHECK-OUT REGISTERS, UNLESS THE STORE CASHIER VERIFIES THE IDENTIFICATION CARD THE USER PRESENTS. WHEN AUTHORIZED USERS FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MAKE PURCHASES THE USER MUST PRESENT THE VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD THAT AGENCY ISSUED.**

Self-Service Store staff shall write the user's identification card number on all store receipts. This measure is necessary to identify users with illegible signatures.

6. Review of ICD Charge Card Controls

Staff from the Division of Logistics will conduct periodic on-site reviews to ensure each ICD complies with the provisions of this Manual Chapter. Specifically, the DL staff will evaluate the measures the card custodian takes to safeguard and control the charge cards (D.3.). They shall review the purchases and credits to ensure the ICD takes reasonable measures to prevent fraud, waste or abuse of government supplies or government funds (D.4.).

Please see paper copy for Appendix information.

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